

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS monthly regular meeting**

**Date:** Thursday, January 7, 2021

**Time:**  10:00 A.M.

**Place:**  Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Mary Ann Cluggish Chair; Les Ball, Vice Chair; N. Janeen Resnick, Secretary; Deb Abraham; Vicky Biancolo; Debby Conrad; Stacy DeBole; Mary Kronholm; Gina Perille

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Andrea Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Kate Butler, Electronic Services Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Susan Gibson, Accountant V; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; Evan Knight, Preservation Specialist;

Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Matthew Perry, Communications Specialist;

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs / Government Liaison; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist

**Observers Present:**

Eileen Chandler, Administrator, Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing Network (CLAMS); Kyle DeCicco-Carey, Library Director, Millicent Library, Fairhaven; Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE); Jan Hagman, Library Director, Billerica Public Library; Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Alysa Hayden, Assistant Director, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody; Jennifer Inglis, Library Director, Lynnfield Public Library; Marie Letarte, Library Director, Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton; Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Catherine Mardula, Library Trustee, Tyringham Free Public Library; Cate Merlin, Library Director, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; David Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

**Meeting called to order by Chair Cluggish**

Chair Cluggish called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Chair Cluggish welcomed everyone and described the meeting process under the Open Meeting Law for remote meetings.

Chair Cluggish also explained that she would be making a motion for a consent agenda. A consent agenda is a board meeting practice that groups routine motions into the consent agenda. If there is no objection, the Chair can declare a motion passed, rather than counting votes for each motion separately.
Chair Cluggish called the roll of attendance per the Open Meeting Law for Remote meetings.

Chair Cluggish moved to join the Approval of the Minutes (Agenda item 2), Update to State Aid Policies for 2021 that impact 2022 (Agenda item 7, Approval of the FY2022 Legislative Agenda (Agenda item 8), and Adjournment (Agenda item 17) to a consent agenda.

Commissioner Perille moved and Commissioner Ball seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the consent agenda.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Conrad- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Biancolo- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Approval of Minutes from the regular monthly meeting: January 7, 2021**

Chair Cluggish asked for any objections to the Consent agenda for the Approval of the January 7, 2021 Regular Monthly Board Minutes. Chair Cluggish asked for a vote to accept the minutes under the consent agenda.

Hearing no objection, Chair Cluggish declared that the motion passed under the consent agenda.

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Cluggish presented the following report:

In the past month I participated in or observed the following Virtual Meetings:

* Introduction to Library Planning Tool webinar
* Participated in the drafting of the “Top Five Reasons You Should Care About the Legislative Agenda”
* Strategic Plan Special Meeting
* Commissioner Orientation for Vicky Biancolo and Debby Conrad
* Swearing in of Debby Conrad
* Swearing in of Vicky Biancolo
* Executive board meeting

Today we have a special welcome to our two new Commissioners, Vicky Biancolo and Debby Conrad; they both have had leadership roles in the wider library sector. I've asked each of them to introduce themselves during the Commissioner Reports, but I'll say a few words to start.

Vicky currently serves as the Director of Library Services at Miss Hall's School in Pittsfield. Among other library activities she served on the board of the Western Mass Regional Library System and served as a founding member of the MLS Board.

Debby was the Chief Executive Officer of the SAILS Library Network for 29 years. Prior to that she was Network Administrator for the Eastern Massachusetts Regional Library System. She served on the Mass Library Association Board, and in 2014 was inducted into the MLA Hall of Fame.

Roles and Responsibilities Orientation Document

Last summer, while attending an orientation, Roland Ochsenbein noticed that there was no specific document laying out the role and responsibilities of Commissioners, or the nuance and distinctions that often aren't understood until one has been on the Board for a while.  So, I suggested that Roland, Jan Resnick and I write one.

We started writing it in August and completed it in late December after James and Rob Favini put some final touches on it. It was Version 12 by the time we decided it was ready for prime time and it said what we wanted it to say. It will be part of Commissioner orientations from now on and will reside in the Commissioner Orientation LibGuide on the MBLC website.

Upcoming Months

In January, we begin our 4 busiest months; State Aid, Waivers and Legislative Advocacy will occupy much of our time. The Waiver process is late this year due to changes caused by COVID-19. The State Aid team has been working weekends and days off to get ready for the upcoming process. I hope you will find time to watch the recording of the Waiver Webinar for Directors, Staff and Trustees as suggested by Liz Babbitt in preparation for the upcoming January 12 Waiver Webinar for Commissioners.

My belief is that when libraries have to send in a delegation to meet with us, that they feel bad or angry enough already, so it is our job not only to ask questions to delve into the circumstances, but to help them work through that so they can come out on the other side. It's a very big deal to deny certification to a library, and it can feel like a crushing and embarrassing event for a community. But we do know, from one situation after another, that decertification is one of the most powerful tools we can give a library when their community is disproportionately underfunding them.

Congratulations Again!

Congratulations once again to Lauren Stara and Andrea Bunker for their article on Library HVAC Systems published in Library Journal. National recognition is getting to be a habit!

**Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Biancolo stated that she is not a life long librarian. She said it took her a long time to find her passion as a librarian. She is so happy to be able to help libraries throughout the entire Commonwealth. She has attended the New Commissioner Orientation and the Open Feedback Session on Statewide Databases presented by Kate Butler and Tressa Santillo.

Commissioner Conrad is very exited to serve on the Board. She stated that her entire career has been focused on library consortiums. Her focus is equity of access to technology. She has attended the New Commissioner Orientation and the Open Feedback Session on Statewide Databases presented by Kate Butler and Tressa Santillo.

**Commissioner Abraham**

* Participated in MBLC Special Meeting on December 17, 2020
* Attended PR Committee subgroup meeting about top 5 Reasons for the Legislative Agenda

**Commissioner Ball**

* Participated in MBLC Special Meeting on December 17, 2020
* Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting

**Commissioner DeBole**

* Participated in MBLC Special Meeting on December 17, 2020
* Discussion with Director Lonergan about promotional materials

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Participated in MBLC Special Meeting on December 17, 2020
* Attended PR Committee subgroup meeting about top 5 Reasons for the Legislative Agenda

**Commissioner Perille**

* December 10 - MBLC Introduction of Library Space webinar
* Collaborated with Celeste & Communications Team on documents that came out of PR Committee meetings
* December 17 - Special board meeting on the MBLC strategic plan
* December 29 - School and public librarian connection/collaboration discussion

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Participated in MBLC Special Meeting on December 17, 2020
* Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting
* Worked on Roles and Responsibilities for Commissioners

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:

* December 4—Presented MBLC update during Western Mass. Library Advocates Board Meeting, virtual
* December 7—IMLS Public Library Survey webinar
* December 8—COSLA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Engagement Group meeting
* December 10—Introduction to Library Planning Tool webinar
* December 10—IMLS/Califa National Leadership Grant COVID-19 project webinar
* December 10 & January 6—Calls with Noah McClanan, Office of Boards and Commissions
* December 10, 15, 16, 17—Calls with Abby Straus re: strategic plan
* December 11—MLA Executive Board, virtual
* December 14—MLS Executive Board orientation and meeting, virtual
* December 15—COSLA/State Library Agencies conversation with New York Times, virtual
* December 17—Swearing-in ceremony for Commissioner Conrad, virtual
* December 17—MBLC Special Board meeting, virtual
* December 21—New Commissioner Orientation, virtual
* January 5—Swearing-in ceremony for Commissioner Biancolo, virtual

**FY2021 State Budget**: While Governor Baker had vetoed funding increases for the Perkins and Worcester Talking Book Libraries, the Massachusetts Center for the Book, and the Technology and Resource Sharing line (7000-9506), the House and Senate overrode the vetoes. Our final FY2021 budget is as follows:



The FY2021 federal budget includes a $5 million increase from the previous yearfor the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**, including $2 million for the Library Services and Technology Act. Despite threats by the White House to eliminate the agency completely for four consecutive years, funding for the IMLS has increased from $231 million to $257 million.

The Omnibus and COVID-19 relief bill did not include direct relief funding through IMLS, as the CARES Act bill did.

Amid these negotiations, the [**Build America’s Libraries Act**](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.ala.org_news_member-2Dnews_2020_12_ala-2Dwelcomes-2Dbuild-2Damericas-2Dlibraries-2Dact&d=DwMFAw&c=lDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fVahWL0QWnGCCAfCDz1Bns_w&r=0U55ApN2m4A78zFCD70K44pBwwOK_KKmcw2sHEeTgiQ&m=2cdRLtvFeBTSlW93xIofWKQHv-jh_4vVOFtOmo4BMRo&s=MYphlf_D9Q63M8f-N6efkvjTLGjqnlg4FLcg4edIhWw&e=) was introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI). The legislation would provide $5 billion to repair and construct modern public library facilities in underserved and disadvantaged communities (school libraries were covered in an earlier bill). The Build America’s Libraries Act would provide funding for capital improvement projects in libraries.  Funding would be distributed through IMLS to state library agencies, which would then award grants on a competitive basis to libraries in each state. Funding would be prioritized to libraries serving marginalized communities, such as high-poverty areas. Additionally, IMLS would provide funding directly to tribal libraries.

Eligible uses of the funding include conducting facilities condition assessments, needs assessments, and master planning; financing new library facilities; or making capital improvements to existing library facilities, including buildings, grounds, and bookmobiles. Eligible facilities include public libraries, tribal libraries, and state libraries that directly serve the general public.

Improvements to library facilities could include enhancements to protect health and safety, such as preventing the spread of COVID-19 and mitigating risks from natural disasters; upgrade broadband equipment and technology hardware; ensure accessibility for people with disabilities; abate hazards such as mold and lead; and increase environmental sustainability, such as energy efficiency.

**LSTA Direct Grant Round Update:** We received 77 LSTA Direct Grant letters of intent through the December 3 deadline totaling $692,300 in funding requests. The next step in the process will be Shelley Quezada and Lyndsay Forbes delivering virtual grant writing workshops on January 12, 14 and 20. This year’s workshops will highlight the added grant application scoring component of equity, diversity and inclusion.

**Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) State Program Report (SPR):** We filed the annual program report with IMLS in late December, including details on 12 statewide projects and 40 direct grants. The SPR represents an accounting of federal funds received by the MBLC. This substantial agency-wide effort involved staff from all divisions and resulted in both a narrative and financial accounting of funds spent. The narrative described the work done by MBLC staff and grant recipients representing library staffs across the Commonwealth who delivered outstanding programs to their communities. IMLS staff often highlight our statewide and direct grant programs for being innovative and effective.

**Gale Editorial Policies:** On December 4 Rob Favini and Kate Butler met with Sarah Sogigian, Scott Keogh and Tressa Santillo of MLS and with Gale editorial, sales and project management staff to discuss Gale product editorial policies. The discussion grew out of a question of how known controversial sites are added as resources (for example, with their Opposing Viewpoints product). This has led to ongoing and constructive discussions around the need for Gale to have a transparent editorial policy that allows for librarian input. In particular, the experience and insights of MLS use and support of Gale products provided invaluable feedback. The product team at Gale has welcomed our input and is using it to improve processes and documentation across multiple products.

On Dec 14, Evan Knight, with Anna Popp, MLS Consultant, organized and hosted a virtual **Special Collections Symposium for Smaller Institutions** focused on state and federal resources specifically designed to support the preservation and sharing of unique collections.  Registrants totaled (87), half of which (45) were public libraries in the Commonwealth. Other attendees included historical societies or special libraries, small museums, and academic libraries, as well as other state agencies including the State Library of Massachusetts. A recording of the symposium is available here: <https://vimeo.com/491815873>, and is the second in a series that will continue grow over time for virtual reference for libraries in the Commonwealth and their staff and volunteers. Here’s a link to the first symposium: <https://vimeo.com/441103615>.

January 14 is the deadline for the Preservation Assessment mini-grant round, and Evan is expecting 6 applications: 5 public libraries and 1 academic. The Preservation Assessments lay the groundwork for bigger, more meaningful, preservation and access projects for these libraries’ community collections in the near future.

Maura Deedy hosted the final **Friends Sharing with Friends** Coffee Hour on December 12. This very successful outreach effort connected a consistent group of Friends who attended to share ideas, brainstorm together and build relationships. Representative from the Massachusetts Friends of Libraries Association attended the sessions as well and used some of the ideas in planning their spring 2021 meeting.

Attendance stats:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Attendance** |
| Friends Sharing with Friends Coffee Hour | 8/17/2020 | 19 |
| Friends Sharing with Friends Coffee Hour | 10/20/2020 | 22 |
| Friends Sharing with Friends Coffee Hour | 11/10/2020 | 11 |
| Friends Sharing with Friends Coffee Hour | 12/10/2020 | 13 |
| **Total** |  | 75 |

**Trustees**: Maura has been working on editing the recorded **Trustee Orientation** video file into segments and is working on the transcript to upload those videos to YouTube.

Maura is also working on the development of future topical trainings including programming focusing on the New Trustee Cycle. These sessions will be more interactive and will include an expanded resource guide.

1. Recruiting New Trustees will focus on the why and how to recruit new trustees, with an eye on board diversity.
2. Onboarding: The culture changes with new board members. This is a library director and trustee board joint effort to bring folks on board. What materials are needed, what information needs to be shared, and encourage a board buddy system for new members.
3. Mentoring and Working Together - as the culture changes, new skills are needed for understanding communication styles and microaggressions, difficult conversations.  Likewise, how are board members prepped for leadership in the future?

**New Directors Search Resources Update**: Maura has begun the planning phase of this project by setting up a discussion list, a Google drive with materials, and starting to reach out to library directors, trustees and State Advisory Council for Libraries (SACL) members to be a part of an advisory committee. Work will continue through the spring.

The **Communications Team** has been busy developing items to support the Board’s FY2022 legislative initiatives. A special meeting of the 19-member statewide PR Advisory Committee was held to discuss content for the legislative agenda. This was turned into a draft document that was sent to MLA, networks, and other stakeholders for input.

The team has also worked with stakeholders on affiliate sheets that describe the important work that each of the MBLC-funded affiliates do. These will be included on the Legislative Agenda section of the website. They have also developed the top 5 reasons you should care about the legislative agenda. The target audience for this document is the library community.

The team also continues to spearhead the successful launch of the Library Space Planning tool.
In addition, in collaboration with the PR Committee, they have finished the new Statewide Strategic Communications and Public Awareness Plan which will guide their work over the next three years and be used to secure an advertising agency to support the plan’s execution.

Finally, the team is also currently prepping for the Massachusetts Municipal Association conference which will happen virtually at the end of the month.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs/Government Liaison presented the following report:

The revenue reports are available on the Department of Revenue’s (DOR) website:

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-revenue>

In addition to the revenue reports, there is a very helpful section called “The Division of Local Services” with information for local municipal governments, departments, and agencies.

New site with FY 2022 budget process and 192nd General Court information: <https://malegislature.gov/>

Mass Budget and Policy Center: <https://massbudget.org/>

**The Senate swore in two new members, both Democrats:**Senators- Adam Gomez of Springfield and John Cronin of Lunenburg.
**The House swore in 17 new members** — two Republicans and 15 Democrats
**The newly-elected representatives** are Kip Diggs and Steve Xiarhos of Barnstable, Adam Scanlon of North Attleboro, Sally Kerans of Danvers, Kelly Pease of Westfield, Patricia Duffy of Holyoke, Jake Oliveira of Ludlow, Orlando Ramos of Springfield, Vanna Howard of Lowell, Erika Uyterhoeven of Somerville, Steven Owens of Watertown, Ted Philips of Sharon, Brandy Fluker Oakley and Rob Consalvo of Boston, Jessica Giannino of Revere, Mike Kushmerek of Fitchburg, and Meghan Kilcoyne of Northborough.

With the departure from the House of Robert DeLeo, Massachusetts’ longest serving Speaker, as he takes up a position at Northeastern University, House Members elected Ronald Mariano of Quincy as their next leader at the close of the Legislative Session in December. Speaker Mariano was reelected after the new 192nd General Court was sworn in on January 5. Speaker Mariano outlined his agenda for the House two-year session and repeated his pledge to make his leadership team reflective of the increasing diversity in the House. The new Speaker may also keep some of Speaker DeLeo’s leadership team intact as he was a member of that team and has worked with them for years. House business is often delayed after an election as office and committee assignments are the first order of business. New legislators will need to wait until returning members receive their committee assignments and leadership positions before obtaining offices and committee posts.

State tax collections increased more than eight percent in December and remained higher than predicted for the first two quarters of the fiscal year. Tax collections of $2.842 billion last month were $230 million or 8.8 higher than collections in December 2019, and midway through fiscal 2021 tax collections are running $372 million or 2.7 percent higher than the same period in fiscal 2020. In conjunction with signing a $45.9 billion fiscal year 2021 budget on Dec. 11, Governor Baker’s budget team also revised tax revenue predictions by $459 million to $28.44 billion.

In typical years, The budget process unfolds over several months, beginning in January with the Governor’s proposal, the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Hearings in February and March, the House Budget in April, the Senate Budget in May, the Conference Committee in June, with the final votes in time for an annual budget in place for July 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year. Massachusetts has not had a final budget in place for the beginning of a new fiscal year for several years. This year’s budget was delayed until late December due to the COVID 19 emergency. The Governor revised his January 2020 House 2 proposal in early November, the House and Senate completed their work in late November and early December and the final budget was approved after the House and Senate overrode the Governor’s vetoes in late December.

Work on the FY 2022 budget has already begun with discussion among Administration and Finance (ANF), legislative leadership, the DOR and Treasurer’s office regarding the consensus revenue projections for next year. The Governor’s House 1 budget is due out in a matter of weeks. The outline of the budget process below is directly from the Legislature’s website:

## [FY 2022 Budget](https://malegislature.gov/Budget)

1. [Governor's Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/GovernorsBudget)  House 1 budget due out before the end of January, usually in conjunction with the Governor’s State of the Commonwealth speech.
2. [House Ways & Means Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/HouseWaysMeansBudget) The House Committee on Ways and Means examines the [Governor's Proposal](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/GovernorsBudget) and releases its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the House of Representatives. Prior to release of the House Ways and Means Budget, Joint Ways and Means Committee budget hearings are held across the state.
3. [House Debate:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/HouseDebate) The full body of the House of Representatives considers amendments to the [House Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/HouseWaysMeansBudget), and debates their inclusion in the bill. This is a very busy time for the House of Representatives, as the Representatives and their staffs are constantly working to make sure the concerns and needs of their constituents are addressed in the final budget.
4. [House Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/HouseBudget) After debate on amendments to the [House Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/HouseWaysMeansBudget), the House of Representatives then approves a final, amended version of the bill which is then sent to the Senate for consideration.
5. [Senate Ways & Means Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/SenateWaysMeansBudget) The Senate Committee on Ways and Means examines both the [Governor's proposal](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/GovernorsBudget) and the [House proposal](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/HouseBudget) and releases its own. recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the Senate.
6. [Senate Debate:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/SenateDebate) The full body of the Senate considers amendments to the [Senate Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/SenateWaysMeansBudget), and debates their inclusion in the bill. This is a very busy time for the Senate, as the Senators and their staffs are constantly working to make sure the concerns and needs of their constituents are addressed in the final budget.
7. [Senate Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/SenateBudget) After debate on amendments to [Senate Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/SenateWaysMeansBudget), the Senate then approves a final, amended version of the bill which is then sent to a Conference Committee for review.
8. [Conference Committee:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/ConferenceCommittee) The House and Senate appoint three members each to a "Conference Committee" to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate proposals. One member of the minority party must be appointed by each branch. The Conference Committee reports a final compromise bill to the House and Senate for a final vote of acceptance in each branch.
9. [Final Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FinalBudget) The Governor has 10 days to review the budget and take action to either approve or veto the budget. The Governor may approve or veto the entire budget, veto or reduce specific line items, veto outside sections or submit changes as an amendment to the budget for further consideration by the Legislature. Following any legislative overrides to the Governor's actions, the budget is finalized and is commonly referred to as the "General Appropriations Act" (GAA) for the upcoming fiscal year. (<https://budget.digital.mass.gov/summary/fy21/> Final FY 2021 budget).

The Massachusetts Library Association’s (MLA) Legislative Committee meets tomorrow, January 8. Virtual Legislative Breakfasts will be among the topics for discussion on the Agenda. Commissioners will receive information about these and various other library legislative events as details are finalized.

**Update to State Aid Policies for 2021 that impact 2022**

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs and Government Liaison presented the update to the State Aid Policies.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) has had numerous inquiries regarding possible changes to the State Aid to Public Libraries Program this year in light of the COVID 19 pandemic; most of those questions concern the Hours Open Requirement for Fiscal Year 2021 for the Fiscal Year 2022 State Aid cycle.

Throughout its 130 year history, the MBLC has maintained a program of State Aid to Public Libraries that provided funds to cities and towns to establish free public libraries and offered book collections to create and promote a system of resource sharing among libraries across the Commonwealth. The current Program includes the [Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR)](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/regs-standards.php#mar) and [Minimum Standards of Free Library Services](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/regs-standards.php#standards). Over the years, the MBLC has found it necessary to adjust these requirements when the state or the nation has faced financial hardships (see [Policies](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/policies.php)), including Accommodation Policies related to both the Hours Open and Materials Expenditure Requirements and annual budget language that provides Commissioners with the authority to approve as many waivers as needed beyond the ten allowed in Statute (Chapter 78 Section 19A). We have never faced a crisis of this magnitude and the normal adjustments or “accommodations” are clearly not adequate to meet the needs of participants in the State Aid Program during this pandemic and economic crisis.

These are unprecedented times and we don’t know, even at this point in the current fiscal year, whether libraries will be able to return to full and open service before next summer. Obviously, much will depend on decisions made by local Boards of Health and leading health experts that are advising the Governor, his re-opening and vaccine task forces, and our federal officials.

We know that, in addition to the routine activities, current library daily/weekly schedules are being consumed with cleaning and material quarantine protocols and with the more labor-intensive procedures surrounding curbside delivery services. Many libraries are struggling with the limits of their buildings due to age, size, or configuration that make opening them to the public in this environment unworkable and unsafe. There are also ongoing concerns related to disruptions in service resulting from the current second/third wave of the virus and/or additional closures due to staff and patron virus exposure. These considerations will continue to have a direct impact on the number of hours each day and days each week libraries will be able to open and maintain direct services to the public. Meeting the hours open requirement in these circumstances will be a challenge for most of the 347 municipalities that participate in the State Aid Program.

The MBLC realizes that libraries are very different from one town to another and, therefore, there is no one size fits all plan or service model recommendation for re-opening and maintaining services nor is there a definitive timeline or schedule that works across the State. Libraries should only be open the number of hours and days at a service level they can maintain safely, in consultation with their local officials and health authorities. Many libraries have reported to us that they will be continuing curbside services rather than open their buildings to in person visits for the foreseeable future. Some have started to provide limited browsing by appointment, but others, out of an abundance of caution, and at the urging of their health departments, remain closed, offering outside or lobby pick up only. This will impact the Hours Open Requirement for FY 2022 State Aid cycle.

The Commission continues to be as flexible as possible given that the MBLC’s primary focus is the health, safety, and security of library staff and public. Commissioners don’t want to see libraries remaining closed due to budget cuts or staff furloughs or layoffs, but neither does the Board want to see libraries open more hours than is safe in the mistaken belief that they are jeopardizing certification in the State Aid Program. As long as a library is doing its best to provide services to the public (e.g. curbside, limited browsing, online programming, phone, email, text, online Reference and Readers Advisory, etc.) in a manner that is safest for staff and patrons, it will not lose certification next year based on the hours open this year.

Additionally, the MBLC encourages all libraries to continue purchasing materials for their print, non-print, and online collections to share with patrons both locally and statewide through the full fiscal year and at a level that meets the full requirement. The collections and online resources we are able to provide collectively this year are critical for our communities as they continue to learn and work remotely. That said, with the approval of the recommended Policy changes, libraries that are unable to meet the Materials Expenditure Requirement for FY 2021 (ending June 30, 2021) will not be penalized with a reduced State Aid Award and will be considered as meeting the full Materials Expenditure Requirement (reported on the FY 2021 Application and Compliance form) for the FY 2022 State Aid cycle.

Chair Cluggish asked if there were any objections to the consent agenda for the Update to the State Aid Polices for 2021 that impact 2022. Chair Cluggish asked for a roll call of Commissioners to accept.

**Hearing no objection, Chair Cluggish declared that the motion passed under the consent agenda.**

**Approval of the FY2022 Legislative Agenda Totals**

Chair Cluggish asked if there were any objections to the consent agenda for the Approval of the FY2022 Legislative Agenda totals. Chair Cluggish asked for a roll call of Commissioners to accept.

**Hearing no objection, Chair Cluggish declared that the motion passed under the consent agenda.**



**consideration of approval of the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget at the December 3, 2020 meeting.

The MLS Executive Board unanimously approved the FY2022 Plan of Service and Budget at its October 5, 2020 meeting and it was presented to the MLS Council of Members virtually on November 2, 2020. The MLS Executive Board gave final approval on November 16, 2020.

The budget is based on our current annual budget figure: $8,637,000.

The priorities of the Plan of Service and the implementation of our new Strategic Plan are described in the introduction. Additionally, we will present an annual Action Plan to connect our work to our plan.

**In 2021-2024 MLS will focus on these three initiatives:**

* Initiative 1: MLS ensures its services are sustainable, prioritize member needs, and equitably serve all member types.
* Initiative 2: MLS empowers leaders to emerge at every level of library service, connecting staff throughout the stages of their careers.
* Initiative 3: MLS will take the lead in convening important conversations in and support member-facing initiatives focused on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Social Justice work (IDEALS).

Commissioner Ball moved and Commissioner Perille seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget filed on December 3, 2020 for the Massachusetts Library System, with a bottom line of $8,637,000 as presented in agenda item 9.

Chair Cluggish called the roll for the vote.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Conrad- YES  | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Biancolo- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

The motion passes.

**consideration of approval of the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Library for the Commonwealth**

Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL) presented the Plan of Service and Budget.

The FY2022 budget and plan of service for the Library for the Commonwealth program, administered by Boston Public Library (BPL), and funded through state budget line 7000-9401, we are submitting is level-funded at $2,879,000.

Next year, we will continue to provide services in four key areas:

* Digital Commonwealth & Digitization Services
* Statewide Reference & Research
* Education & Civic Engagement
* Statewide Collection Development & Access

As we have done in the past, we do request that the personnel costs for the two developer positions and the statewide metadata coordinator working on the Digital Commonwealth project be over and above the 50% personnel costs allowed in the LFC budget.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Kronholm seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget filed on November 24, 2020 for the Library for the Commonwealth, with a bottom line of $2,879,000 as presented in agenda item 10.

Chair Cluggish called the roll for the vote.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Conrad- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Biancolo- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

The motion passes.

**Report from the Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the following report to the Board:

**Site Visits**

In person site visits will be suspended due to the pandemic. I will review in mid-February. Virtual engagements continue to take place, using telecom software and telephone.

**MLS Annual Meeting**

Almost 200 people attended our first virtual annual meeting. While the votes called were unanimously approved, we are unsure if we met our requirements of a quorum, receiving 40 votes. Per our Bylaws, I will ask the Executive Board to cast the final vote at the November meeting.

Our speakers were well-received, as was our meeting format. Selected comments:

“Lots of interaction kept the attendees very involved.....very impressive. [You have] More than a "pretty good" track record of annual meeting speakers. “

“Hands down: Best MLS hour I've ever spent.”

“Stephanie Chase did a great job in presenting your bold new strategic plan, which could easily have been a slog (or a snooze :)”

“there weren't even any tech problems that I noticed.”

“well done, Sarah, by you and everyone on the MLS team!”

**Continuing Education**

The spring season of CE will be hosted virtually. Class list and registration can be found on our calendar (calendar.masslibsystem.org).

New and Returning Members

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Librarian Name | Library | Town/City | Email |
| Jason Homer | Worcester Public Library | Worcester | jhomer@mywpl.org |
| Wally Keniston | Franklin County Technical School, Library Media  | Turners Falls | wkeniston@fcts.us |
| Patricia Harding | Sarah Greenwood K-8 School | Dorchester | pharding@bostonpublschools.org |
| Erica Hout, Acting Director | Boylston Public Library | Boylston | ehout@cwmars.org |
| Karen Kohr | Washington Irving Middle School | Boston | kkohr@bostonpublicschools.org |
| Christina Hefler | Up Academy of Dorchester | Dorchester | chefler@upacademydorchestr.org  |
|  |
| This color print= new members |
| This color print= new librarians  |
| This color print= returning schools |
| This color print= temp/Acting librarian |
| This color print= returning school but not a new librarian (new color code this month)  |

**Report from Library for the Commonwealth**

Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator presented the following report:

# **Webinar**

On December 8, the Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center (KBLIC) presented a webinar in partnership with our Mass Library System colleagues and focused on Business and Career Resources. Participants learned about KBLIC services available to entrepreneurs, job-seekers, investors, nonprofits, inventors, and media creators. BPL’s suite of best-in-class electronic and educational tools, as well as subject specific business reference staff, provide countless opportunities to develop new career skills, embark on business ownership, and discover creative design technologies.

# **BPL to GO app**

The BPL to Go app that was launched earlier this year in March was originally only available for iOS devices. Beginning last month, it is now also available on Android devices and available for download in Google Play, in addition to Apple’s App store.

# **Computer Use**

Our in-person computer use sessions have been consistently booked and it is difficult to meet demand while also balancing safety measures. In effort to meet this need, BPL will be launching a program to lend Chromebooks along with hotpots for one-week intervals. We will start with 75 computers and hotspots and evaluate this program from there. There will also be a designated phone line for assistance with computer use and troubleshooting any technical issues that may arise. Official launch date is forthcoming.

**Libraries and COVID-19 Discussion**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development stated that the Governor has pulled back to 20% capacity again. We don’t have a lot of libraries that are open for browsing but curbside is still going strong. There aren’t a lot of people hanging currently in libraries. Some libraries have also had some COVID-19 illnesses.

The vaccine plan is different than the reopening plan. We are monitoring the vaccine distribution list to see if it is possible to move library workers up on the list, perhaps to be included with educators or the retail workers cohort.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**List of documents for the January 7, 2021 Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the January 7, 2021, Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Draft Minutes of the December 3, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
3. Draft Minutes of the December 17, 2020 Special Board Meeting
4. Agenda 7, Emergency State Aid Policy Changes
5. Agenda 8, FY2022 Legislative Agenda Totals
6. Agenda Item 9, FY2022 Massachusetts Library System Plan of Service and Program and Budget
7. Agenda Item 10, FY2022 Library for the Commonwealth Plan of Service and Program and Budget

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Cluggish moved to adjourn the January 7, 2021 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 12:45 PM under the consent agenda.

Hearing no objections, Chair Cluggish adjourned the meeting.



N. Janeen Resnick

Secretary